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M. C. MacLean, M.A., F.S.S.A COLLEGE OF EDUCATION FOR THE BRITISH EMPIRE IN LONDON

1933

An announcement of unusual interest to Canadians, educationists more particularly, has recently come from Great Britain. It is to the effect that the University of London has taken over the London Day Training College for teachers, and is proceeding to build up in connection with it an Imperial Institute of Education, or graduate school of education especially equipped to encourage the attendance of educationists from all parts of the Empire. In the words of the University's statement of policy its object is "the creation in London of a strongly equipped centre for the continuous discussion and investigation of educational problems that are important to the constituents of the British Commonwealth, and for the training of men and women who are to play parts of more than ordinary importance in the educational systems of the Commonwealth."

".....The educational experience of Englishmen, gained through centuries of work at home and in every conceivable situation abroad is, taken as a whole, unique, but its value is from the Imperial point of view, largely lost, because there is no institution where it can be focussed and made conscious, no organ through which it can be expressed. For that reason we have been leaving to other nations - particularly to the United States, whose educational experience, though less than ours, is better studied and organized - the task of helping the daughter-nations of Britain to do their educational thinking and planning, and of training their leading educational workers."

In addition to courses leading to the M.A. and Ph.D. in Education, the Institute will provide programmes for those who have a more limited time to spend in London. Two key departments of study will be "Education in the British Commonwealth" and "Colonial Education", in connection with which there will be lecturers from the Dominions and Colonies respectively, and wherein students from one part of the Empire will have an opportunity of familiarizing themselves with the problems and experience of those in other parts. There will also be a Department of Comparative Educational Administration in which overseas students will be enabled to study the educational systems of the British Isles and of the Continent, and at the same time, presumably, to take advantage of organized tours to continental countries such as the 21-day tour in April to the U.S.S.R. arranged in the last two years by the Society for Cultural Relations with the U.S.S.R. There will also be Departments of Educational Enquiries and Research, Child Development, etc. The nucleus of students from which the Imperial aspect of the Institute is expected to develop was represented last year by four students from India, eight from the Colonies and six from the Dominions.

In regard to assisting teachers and others to study at the Institute, it is pointed out that the colonial governments have already begun to send selected educational officers home to take a year's course, and have assisted missionary bodies to send some of their senior teachers. The hope is expressed that authorities in the several Dominions may see fit to adopt a similar policy. It is further expected that one or two of the great corporations whose funds are devoted to educational purposes may be able to provide scholarships to overseas students who wish to take courses at the Institute.

In support of the establishment of such a centre, the University's statement says it had been advocated and its main functions discussed by Sir Percy Nunn from the home point of view, and from the oversea point of view by Professor P. Sandiford of the University of Toronto, by Professor F. Clarke, formerly of the University of Cape Town, now of McGill, and by others. At meetings of the British Commonwealth Educational Conference, and in the Educational Section of the British Association it had been approved by Vice-Chancellors of the Cape Town, New Zealand, and Alberta Universities, as well as by home authorities such as Mr. Ormsby Gore, Lord Eustace Percy, Sir Charles Grant Robertson and Sir Michael Sadler.

Canadians interested in the work of the Institute will be able to obtain fuller data concerning it by addressing the Institute of Education, University of London.

AN EMPIRE YEAR BOOK OF EDUCATION

Complementary to the idea of an Imperial Institute of Education is the Empire Year Book of Education, the first edition of which appeared in 1932, with Lord Eustace Percy, former President of the Board of Education, as Editor-in-Chief. In his Introduction to the first edition he writes that the justification for the Year Book lies in the fact that "for Englishmen, Scotsmen, and Irishmen, and for their fellow-citizens overseas, there is a central theme in matters of education which has been comparatively neglected because it requires for its proper development a stage, wider than can be afforded by any single treatise. That theme is the common tradition of education shared by all the countries composing the British Empire, and, it may be added, the common duty in education which they also share. This has not been a tradition consciously realised and developed; on the contrary, Canada, for instance, has, until recently, been, perhaps, less conscious of her indebtedness to the Scottish parish school than of her imitation of the American high school and university.".....

"It is necessary to take a wide survey of Empire educational systems as they exist and to examine their historical growth. Only after this has been done can the student compare them, noting their differences and their similarities and observing, as he surely will, that he is dealing, not with policies originating from a common source, but rather with policies of very various origins which at the present day show a remarkable tendency to converge under the pressure of common problems and the influence of common social ideas But even a survey of the whole Empire is not enough. If the common features of British education at home and overseas are to be intelligently observed, it is also necessary to study British education against the background of the educational systems of other nations."

With this comprehensive design for the Year Book, the result is a volume of about 1,000 pages divided into three main parts: (1) Great Britain and Northern Ireland; (2) The British Commonwealth of Nations; (3) Foreign Countries. In the words of the Editor-in-Chief it is not to be a repository of facts to be kept up to date, as much as a serial, each successive issue of which will open up new ground, as well as consolidate that already traversed. Contributions concerning different countries are made by educationists of those countries. Canadian articles in the first two editions, for instance, are provided by Dean W. Pakenham of the Ontario College of Education, Professor F. Clarke of the McGill Education Department, President Carleton Stanley of Dalhousie, and statistical data are supplied by the Education Branch of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. In the first edition a compilation of the Bureau is published "as an illustration of the imperial statistics which we may expect to see collected at the next Imperial Education Conference," - i.e. according to the form approved by the Conference of 1927.

The volume is at once a work of reference and a collection of essays treating of the subject of education within the Empire as a single theme.





